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ROCKY MOUNTAIN REVIEW

Volume 10, Number 3 Spring, 1946

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ROCKY MOUNTAIN REVIEW is published quarterly by the Rocky Mountain Press at 411 West 2nd North Street, Logan, Utah. All manuscripts should be addressed to Box 2225, Salt Lake City 13, Utah. Return of manuscripts cannot be made unless accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope. **Subscription:** $1.50 yearly; Canada, $1.65; other foreign countries, $1.80. Copyright, 1946, by Rocky Mountain Press. Entered as Second Class Matter February 27, 1946 at the Post Office in Logan, Utah under the act of March 3, 1879.

COMMENT

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* * *

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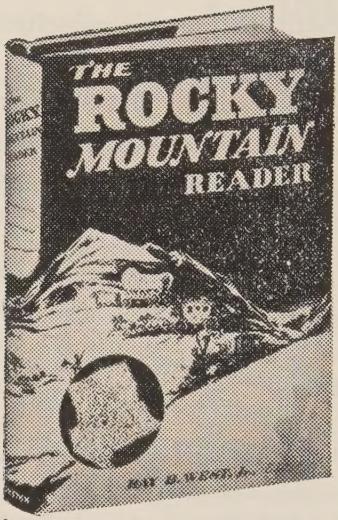

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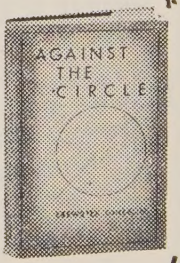

AGAINST THE CIRCLE

by BREWSTER GHISELIN

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EXAMINATION OF MODERN AUTHORS: 3

JULES ROMAINS:

The Quinette Beneath The Skin

BY HAROLD H. WATTS

Among the memorable and even terrifying figures one recalls from Jules Romains' *Men of Good Will* is a certain M. Quinette. To his world, Quinette is a rather colorless, middle-aged man; he conducts a bookshop, and one of his specialties is binding books for solitary persons. His behavior escapes both general reproach and serious police investigation. But beneath the colorless exterior, the anonymity which the vastness of Paris, of modern society, imposes upon Quinette, there is an intense, startling activity – and not, as with most of the anonymous, a dream activity. Quinette is an actual murderer, a murderer who feels no malice towards his victims. He has accounted for many persons; yet only one young man discovers his secret in its entirety, and this young man is a like-minded being who has no desire to betray Quinette, who desires only to share his pleasures.

With an intensity that renews the impetus of Romains' long work whenever he reappears, Quinette engineers his successive crimes: crimes which, in approach, indeed resemble many a seduction elsewhere in the novel. For after the triumphant conclusion of one deed, the criminal fever wanes; Quinette takes up ordinary preoccupations – he refurbishes his shop in Paris, he contemplates opening up a better establishment in Nice. But we see enough of the man to know that his special fever will renew itself. We come to know that it is less the crime itself than the pursuit of the victim that rejuvenates Quinette, that gives his life a meaning. Death is always the goal, but it may be approached in varying ways since the victim and his "psychology" are never the same. And when Quinette is on his death-bed, he summons a literary man – Pierre Jallez, who is also important in Romains' novel – and tries to explain that he hopes for posthumous recogni-

tion of his greatness as a murderer. But Jallez has arrived too late, and Quinette can but murmur that here lies one who has outdone Landru, the great French assassin; for Landru was caught and Quinette has escaped detection. The reader suspects that Jallez will manage (in the last volume of *Men of Good Will*) to do Quinette the justice that Romains, at many points in the novel, has already done him. The reader also suspects that Jallez will discover a correspondence between himself and the surreptitious murderer — a correspondence analogous to the one which links Romains himself to this special creation of his.

That this latter correspondence at any rate exists is undeniable. It has led the author to return frequently to the murderous bookbinder — has led him to do this despite the ostensible and somewhat staggering purpose of *Men of Good Will*: to present representatively if not entirely that stretch of French and European history which extends from October 6, 1908, to some time in 1930. Twenty-two years is a great abyss of time for any author to fill, even if only representatively. It becomes doubly great when the author permits himself to extend the geographical radius of his novel far beyond the limits of Paris, when the author adds to the scores of invented characters that represent most of the conceivable social levels and the deformations of modern life such important historical figures as Jaures, Briand, and Kaiser Wilhelm II. What is Quinette doing in this galley — at least so prominently? What, for that matter, accounts for the intrusion of other anonymities, who, like Quinette, compensate for their exterior respectability by the cultivation of what the conventional would call vice but which they generally regard as the expression of the special intuition that has singled them out? What, in short, is the correspondence between them and their inventor, M. Romains? For the correspondence does exist; it is as compulsive with the novelist as is the renewing criminal fever with Quinette. It is, one imagines, an impulse that guides Romains without his being quite aware of it.

For doubtless the novelist regards each new volume in his series in two ways: as a panel that fills a certain gap of time and (as he varies the setting and the characters) as a panel that makes his novel increasingly representative. One need not deny that the succeeding volumes do both tasks. Romains' field of choice is indeed wide; given his constant variation of scene and metier, he could scarcely fail to be representative, and he has

certainly not failed (as his faithful readers will testify) to blanket certain stretches of time, to give his readers a requisite sense of having lived through a good many years. But to be satisfied with this account of what Romains is accomplishing is to catch only the professed design of the novel – is to miss what gives the work the intermittent elan or excitement that it unquestionably possesses. It is to miss Quinette – Quinette in his relation to the author and Quinette in his relation to other important characters: not only those characters who in perversity rival the bookbinder but also those men whom Romains designates the "heroes" of his novel.

For the novel does have "heroes" even if it lacks villians. (Quinette and his fellows are treated with an impartiality that is no sterner than to suggest that they are certainly not heroes.) The heroes are the "men of good will" who unite their efforts – or, better, *think* about uniting their efforts – to avert war and preserve peace. These heroes as well as the non-heroes, receive the vigor they often display from whatever it is in Romains himself that encourages the inordinate intrusions of Quinette and what we can relate to Quinette.

To isolate this element in the novelist – the "Quinette beneath the skin" – is possible now that the novel is – save for the final volume – a *fait accompli,* a work that draws to its close and can be no other than what the gifts of the author have made it. Most of the critical opinon of *Men of Good Will,* however, was formed during its first years of publication when Romains' professed intention (to take a city and its humanity as subject, to put in artistic form the tensions, the vague gropings, that lead finally to revolutions and wars) had perhaps a real share in the actual shaping of the work. Early opinion also expressed the ready reverence that gigantism always arouses.

But added to these judgments was a profound feeling that what Romains was trying to bring off was important for mankind. This hope was perhaps inspired by acquaintance with what modern historians of culture seemed about to accomplish on a non-imaginative basis. Modern man – this is the hope such efforts inspire – stands on an elevation; from this belvedere he may look back on the history of Europe or (even better) on the course of *all* civilizations. From the conspectus he is able to make he may draw "laws" that describe the rise and fall of societies (older historians, in comparison, seem concerned chiefly with the rise and fall of heroes). Further, these "laws" will gratify our desire to

comprehend, and they may even give men of the future a better chance to control their destinies than men of the past had to control theirs.

Early readers of *Men of Good Will* could often believe that here, on an imaginative basis, was a similar effort – not, of course, based on a survey of all history. But Romains' presentation of *tout Paris* in the first division of his work *The Sixth of October,* aimed at being a completely representative panorama with the "laws" relative to revolution and war either stated or implied. And throughout the novel there continue to bob up apostrophes to the city of Paris at various times of the years, addresses to humanity as it enjoys the freedom of a Sunday afternoon, and descriptions of a nation as it moves into a great war. Romains also persists in the introduction of characters that the reader has completely forgotten or, indeed, has never met. But at least since *Verdun* – the eighth volume – such effects strike one as rather spiritless compliance with a plan that cannot, from deference to consistency, be abandoned. Such effects are now almost this author's equivalent of the embarrassed huddle of characters at the end of a Dickens novel. It is as if Romains were saying: "This is what I promised; can you say that I have not delivered?"

This reader's answer goes: "Only in a way that is no real fulfillment of the promise." The merit, the authentic savor of the book, of the novelist's talent lies elsewhere. This should have been apparent as early as the second division of the series, *Quinette's Crime.* The reader who expected from *Men of Good Will* the benefits that accrue from painstaking, erudite histories of culture should have recalled several things: that the cultural historian (whatever his own fixed ideas) does have to submit to the discipline of records that have accumulated over centuries, records that are relatively recalcitrant. A novelist with a program like Romains' does not have to submit to any discipline but his own sense of truth as he creates his apparently inexhaustible world. At least by the twelfth volume, most readers would agree that Romains' mind, as it puts its stamp on all the characters, is the mind of a man who is cultured but who is no great journeyer among cultures, as the student of the "laws" of human history must be. True, Romains gives no sign of ever exhausting his supply of information as to the minutiae of continental life, in Paris and elsewhere (he is, towards these minutiae, as affectionate and indiscriminate as a magpie). But a "universal novelist" – if such a

creature is ever really to exist — must have something more than this. Implicity if not explicity, he must give his readers a sense that whatever he treats is treated by a man conscious of the sum-total, of the ins and outs, of human history. I can think of no such novelist. And certainly the claims made for Romains' universality must be retracted by some who, at first blush, were eager to crown the long-awaited king. Romains' range of ideas as we encounter them in his three or four "heroes" is simply that which (as I have said) we would expect in a man with some title to being cultured, to being abreast of the predominating currents of thought in his own age. He is a well-informed liberal; he knows the things that liberals know, and he is indifferent to the ranges of experience which liberals consider unimportant. A cultural historian is not; nor — I submit — would a "universal novelist" be. Romains abominates war, he regards (with passionate intensity) peace as a good in itself, and he prefers democracy to communism and facism — prefers democracy despite the dreary picture he gives of its operation in the fair country of France.

There is of course, something that he prefers to democracy, that he regards as a more effective source of social integration and redemption. This — certainly it must be a surprise to his liberal readers — is Free Masonry: either the actual organization, or more often, the spirit that ideally animates it. This inclination towards spiritual free masonry — towards a sort of activity that few, beside Romains, will believe is likely to lead us into a better new age — is the inclination which shapes *Men of Good Will*. . . . shapes it when Romains overlooks his initial and promised intention, or when Quinette is not the guiding spirit. Perhaps even at the very time when Quinette is.

It will be recalled that Romains, when he fled to this country from an invaded France, discredited himself in the eyes of many by publishing (in the *Saturday Evening Post*) a series of articles that had the general title: *The Seven Mysteries of Europe*. These articles recorded Romains' own sincere and even frantic efforts to forestall another war — efforts that took the form of secret, supra-national negotiations with influential men from many parts of Europe. The machinery of democracy — one gathers from like exploits in *Men of Good Will* — is too cumbrous to avert war. War can be averted by "men of good will" who have power but who are not hampered by party or national affiliations, men who can deal directly and even authoritatively with each other — all in the

interest of ends that are beyond question good. Unfortunately, one of Romains' chief "men of good will" was Otto Abetz, later Hitler's governor of the city of Paris. For Abetz, a national tie was stronger than the tacit free-masonry that Romains banked on: Romains seemed to be a dupe.

But there is no Otto Abetz in the novel. And it is Romains' sustained faith in the superior person and that person's boundless ingenuity in the production of expedients, usually towards a good end – it is to this faith that Quinette stands in a mysterious relation. True, Quinette lacks the good will; but he has the ingenuity, the delight in expedients, in setting traps, in discovering devious rather than direct means to a goal that also characterizes and (I think) vitiates the struggles of Romains' "men of good will." Otherwise how explain that the long stretches of the novel – the stretches in which Romains really excels – are sections of continuous narrative (in technique, indistinguishable from conventional novels) in which we see Quinette at his maneuvers – or the "heroes" at *their* maneuvers. Of course, these latter also indulge in long interior monologues in which Romains – and they – once more set up the goals proper to well-intentioned men. (They are always the same goals although Romains naively conveys the sense that his heroes have never scaled *this peak before*). Quinette – cynical readers might observe – has the good sense not to speculate abstrusely. When his fever takes him, he charts a new adventure – that is enough.[1]

The real organization of the novel is something far different from the miscellaneous and brooding work that one might have predicted from *The Sixth of October*. It is a much simpler work. To me, the base-plan often comes only to this: spiritual free-masonry vs. Quinette, the ingenious good against the ingenious, the intermittently serious and inspired against the amoral. Further, much of the yeast that leavens the cakes the "men of good will" put in the oven comes from the same wholesaler who supplies Quinette. More seriously, the theme of the novel as it draws to its completion is the implicit struggle between the morally and socially inert—not, alas, inert in other respects—and those who, from time to time, see their thoughts and deeds as possible

[1]Among other characters whose fascinating, amoral adventures occupy perhaps as much space as Quinette's are Georges Allory a Jewish novelist who pursues membership in the Academy and a novel perversion — both with Quinette-like involvements; and Haverkamp, whose speculative operations Romains admires without however, approving — if one can admire without approving. I do not extend this list; the novel is full of Quinette's brothers.

contributions to the peace of mankind. What chance have they to be effective—against the mass of mankind who are either ignorant and feeble in their quest for happiness or—as with Quinette and his brothers—knowing and without scruple? The answer is: Not much.

Not much, that is, as Romains conceives and presents the struggle, particularly as he presents the supposedly life-preserving efforts of the "men of good will." These men desire to establish human freedom—and settle for free-masonry. Let it not be supposed that I judge these men adversely because their efforts come to naught. All success involves compromise. But compromise as a bitter variation in the monotonous routine of well-doing.

Consider three men that are important bearers of the light: Jallez, Jerphanion, and Laulerque. (A fourth, Clanricard, cannot be classified with them for reasons that will, when they emerge, seem sinister.) Of the three, Laulerque is distinctly on a lower level; he it is who gives up all pretense of doing good. Certainly he has his reasons. He actually joins the Masons and acts (Jallez and Jerphanion are more given to thought than action). He makes a journey to purchase a mysterious house on the Mediterranean; and he sees his efforts come to little (and that little perhaps involving treason to France.) So Laulerque ends as a practicing amoralist, unlike Quinette in that his behavior is part of an intellectual program of violating the conventions of a sickly society.

Jallez and Jerphanion are close friends who persevere in the defense of the peace—after their fashion. Throughout the novel, these two men are our frequent companions and Romains' habitual mouthpieces. With them the novelist's power of individualizing is comparatively weak. Both men draw so close to their creator as to be indistinguishable intellectually, from each other and their maker. To be sure, Romains gives Jerphanion a peasant background, the eccentricity of conjugal fidelity, and the energy to embark on a political career—a career that will demonstrate the little that can be done within democratic limits. Jallez also is given distinguishing marks. He is a writer—the person, recall, summoned to Quinette's death-bed—; he is a roving person, a gatherer of the "sweets of life" (Romains' phrase); he is for a time a secretary in the Geneva of the League. To date, Jallez nourishes hope for civilization—a hope that sees as its chief chance of realization the possibility that Romains himself trusted: the coopera-

tion of men of good will.

A mutual dependence between two friends like Jerphanion and Jallez is understandable. Jallez depends on the peasant virtues in his friend; and Jerphanion enjoys and profits by the mental agility of Jallez. But this contrast should not be emphasized since Romains himself often overlooks it; the separate broodings of the men on the liberal past and the threatening fascist future are interchangeable.

Interchangeable also are the marks that indicate what I call (in Romains and in his "men of good will") the "Quinette beneath the skin": the kind of folly that one feels is suitable to an amoral creature rapt by a private dream but that is disconcerting to observe in men who adulterate their hope for the future with the same sort of folly. Yet Romains himself gives no sign of finding odd the deviation into ingenuity that is recurrent in both Jerphanion and Jallez What use to feel that, along with Jerphanion and Jallez, one is party to a life-battle that will decide the future, a battle in which intelligence is pitted against apathy and indifference? Nor need one deny that this atmosphere of significant excitement is one that Romains excels in creating. But one must add: he excels in dispelling it

Thus, in the section called *Mountain Days*, we accompany Jerphanion, the politician, on the tour for votes which he makes through a distant district. We hear Jerphanion's speeches, and very good "liberal-conservative" talks they are. We see him matching prejudices with the men whose votes he must win. And then we perceive, with a sharp qualm, that Jerphanion is to be involved—and by a proto-fascist, too—in the ferreting out of a mountain crime that involves two murders and, probably, a case of incest. To this distraction, Jerphanion lends his attention as joyfully as would Quinette, who, after all, would not be electioneering. To be sure, the crime remains unsolved; to be sure, Jerphanion forgets it and returns to Paris where he takes up his seat in the Chamber of Deputies. But our power to believe that Jerphanion is really possessed by a spirit of free-masonry is shaken. An American reader recalls that in his country it is the frivolity, the ingenuity, of the Masonic movement that survives—that, of the bold speculative intentions observable in Free-masonry in the "age of enlightenment", hardly a trace survives. In a similar way, Jerphanion's attachment to the cause of humanity seems threatened by a quick decay. It is as if, to Jerphanion and his creator—

and Jerphanion's "case" is no isolated one—the cause of right becomes tedious and some sort of variation upon it, embroidery if not perversion, is acceptable.

I do not believe that this recurrent dispelling of sober idealism into sterile curiosity or (as with Jallez) concupiscence results from a frankly cynical calculation on Romain's part. It would be easy to understand that an author might say to himself: "After all, I must keep my readers interested. Time for the variation of crime or adultery." But with Romains, one feels that the time for crime, for adultery, comes unknown to the author—however painfully plain to the reader the recurrent variation is. One feels that once more has the blindfolded Romains presided at the triumph of Quinette. Thus, Jerphanion has turned to ingenuity—the enchanted scrutiny of murder and incest. Dissipated in the reader's mind is the effect of the great speech Jerphanion made some chapters earlier, the speech that was to anneal the wounds of war, that was to contribute to the preservation of peace.

Jallez's turnings are more numerous and perhaps less surprising. One learns to expect him to push aside his dream of humanity to make room for a dream of seduction. And seduction, as he grows older, must be adorned with novelty, with piquant circumstances—as murder had, from the outset, to be for Quinette. One example suffices. In the most recent volume (*The Wind is Rising*) Jallez gives, as usual, much of his time to such questions as: Is man only mechanism? Is there such a principle as spirit on which the well-trained man may count? (Jerphanion, the simpler man, assures Jallez that spirit exists, it must exist.) But in the middle of such thoughts, Jallez, with a twinge of pleasure that causes a twinge of something else in this reader, finds himself advantageously placed to start the siege of a woman. This time, the woman is not an unsophisticated news-girl, as was Jallez' friend in *The Sweets of Life;* this woman is a deserted wife with a small son to support. Jallez displays a deep interest in her predicament; he undertakes to investigate the husband's present mode of life. To investigate the husband, he must also investigate the husband's mistress. The mistress attracts him too . . . Jallez feels that possibilities are, fortunately, not infinite; but they are richly varied. Varied possibilities, but not infinite. One sees, with both Jallez and Quinette, that it is not the number of victims that counts; it is the *varied* ingenuity required to make them victims. Or, unkindly to vary the formula for Jallez and Laulerque,

the one-time Free Mason, it is not the nobility of the cause—not entirely, that is. It is the chance for intrigue, ambiguous explanations, and veiled revelation which attachment to a cause permits.

So it is with unconscious irony that Romains brings Jallez face-to-face with Quinette on his death-bed. It is bold to say, of a work so vast, unmanageable, and wandering as *Men of Good Will*, "Here is the scene which "explains" the work were there not so many other scenes like it: if we had not heard Jerphanion agree to approach the isolated mountain farmhouse, if we had not observed Jallez delighting in the subterfuge by which he hopes to get his reports past the Russian censor, if we did not remember how Laulerque turns from brooding on his past to an adventure that is odd, that resembles nothing so much as a sinister adventure presided over, two volumes later, by a non-hero, a leader of gangs.

With a start we recall that Laulerque is among the angels and that the gang-leader, Nodiard, is not. Nodiard, who plans to domesticate in Paris an English vice, is as near being named a villian as Romains permits. We are told that Nodiard wishes to reduce promiscuity to a ritualized game; and the purpose? To found a fascist cell, to give it emotional solidarity. At least, Nodiard's breath contributes to the "wind" that, in volume 12, "is rising." Laulerque, when he agrees to substitute for an impotent husband, has not even that end in view . . . Free Masonry has failed; he may as well try this.

All this and more permit the reader, if not the author, to perceive a symbolism in Jallez leaning over Quinette, trying to comprehend the stammering phrases of the dying man. . . the completely ingenious shadowed by the man who keeps his ingenuity within bounds but who would not dream of questioning his taste for ingenuity, of asking whether his pose as a "man of good will" were not curiously qualified by this tendency, this vertigo, this admiring inclination to the amoral which he and his friends share. . . . and his creator too.

One character who does not share this veritgo comes to mind, the dull schoolmaster, Clanricard. Clanricard acts with consistency and clarity. His imagination does not respond to the diversions Romains excels in providing. We do not hear much of Clanricard. Whatever his merits, the blood of Quinette does not pulse in his veins.

And it is the blood of Quinette that is the life-blood of *Men of Good Will.* It is the warmth of that blood that stirs us after

an unexceptionable monologue, after a dutiful excursion to a corner of Paris we have previously missed. Whenever the novel picks up, whenever the reader feels once more a sense of direction, Quinette is near—or if not this worthy, a reflection, now intense, now vague, of a spirit of intrigue and ingenuity. The resulting chapters are vastly superior to E. Phillips Oppenheim, they are superior to the excellent orchestrations of vacuity and evil which one finds in the novels of Georges Simenon. But *Men of Good Will* remains, like its greatest characters, a handiwork that is best when a special sort of perception is at work.

Here—as with other novels called great—the reader may commence with the naive impression that he is going to know all of Paris, all of Russia, or even the vast reaches of the Pacific. He ends by knowing Romains or Tolstoy or Melville. The total effect, one almost concludes, of great novels is lyrical; at least, one's attention comes finally to rest on the contriver and the recurring "burden" of his song. This is certainly true of *Men of Good Will.* What promised to be Paris and humanity turns out to be M. Jules Romains: a personage infinitely industrious in the pursuit of greatness. Nor by greatness do I mean simply literary greatness for the author himself. Romains is haunted by the possibility of human greatness, human greatness by which all mankind shall profit. But the novelist is as wavering in his attachment to it, as uncertain as to what it is, as are his characters Jallez and Jerphanion. Like them, he is willing—out of fatigue as well as from a wish for distraction—to turn to the warmth, the senselessness, the excitement without significance that Quinette offers.

Esssays In The

Examination of Modern Authors series

in future issues will include:

4. *Ernest Hemingway* by D. S. Savage
5. *D. H. Lawrence* by Brewster Ghiselin
6. *E. M. Forester* by D. S. Savage
7. *Katherine Anne Porter* by Ray B. West, Jr.
8. *Sherwood Anderson* by Jarvis Thurston

TWO POEMS

HARRY ROSKOLENKO

NIGHT MANOEUVRE

I was there, slugging through the sea
Where nets for subs imprisoned verticals;
he lacings of tides, brutish alchemies,
Drifted through the barriers of plan.

Out past the Heads, past bronzing glare
Where sharks sunned to slit a body,
We raced! Our pennants summary
Telescoped us Americans, not Japs.

In brief decision, bulked by waves and wind
We sped down pencilings of charts,
Swung in arcs on tilts of breeze,
Slammed on beaches for ATTACK!

Rehearsal for some future garish play,
The little consequences before encounter freezes
The boiling points of head and heart,
To icicles, in sharpened acid sight.

There is that dark shaped massive cloud,
We knew the code that made of us good friends,
Or else the familiar sound of guns
Would mottle us from grim precision eyes.

I was there, running through the wind's jaw
My annunciations of personality and time.
My dual lingerings encountered now
The last barriers before the last crime.

AIRMEN ON LEAVE

A week of leave measured in blood
From war's cancerous cure; as bones to bones tangle
And nerves dissolve on essential targets.
O, they are arriving for seven days of sadness and whoring,
The airmen of tomorrow's yesterday, accepted tragedy.

Their arms, bundling bottles and assorted agencies,
Carrying like mothers shopping for the day;
Filled with emphatic monuments to speed,
Immortalized by beds, companions, garish sex,
Are only so for days that make one week.

Lavish as millionaires, they expend in flight
Their pay of months on embellished arts;
But in letters to home, when sentiment uproots,
They summarize missions, deaths, ends of friends,
When fear knows the contagions it superintends.

MEASURE

BY WILLIAM M. GAILBRAITH

Perhaps meridian; perhaps
whatever measure you wish.
The length of half; the lapse
of so much passing sun;
six cherries from the dish
of twelve, and they'll be done.

and six or eight or ten
is not known. Twelve,
which may not be nibbled again,
may be upon the tongue.
Sweet one, sweet two, sweet Self,
eat gently and eat long.

THE RAIN

BY OLIVE GHISELIN

"I'm looking for *The Leaning Tower* by Katherine Anne Porter," I said. "It isn't in the catalogue."

She was little and squat and had short rough grey hair. Her quick fat fingers ran over the cards in the drawer.

"It's very curious," I said, "because she is an important short story writer. You don't seem to have anything of hers at all."

"If she was important," she snapped, "we'd have it. Maybe she doesn't write short stories at all. Like that English woman. She doesn't write stories. She just goes on about people walking upstairs and looking out of windows and things like that. Nothing happens at all." Her grey eyes defied me.

"You mean Katherine Mansfield?"

"Yes, she's the one. She not a story writer. She was popular for awhile, but nobody asks for her anymore. She won't live."

"What do you think a story is," I said.

"It's writing in which something happens," she said. "And I know. I've had two courses in the short story in the University."

"There are many writers and professors who would disagree with you," I said.

"That may be. But people don't ask for Katherine Mansfield any more. I tell you, she won't live."

We stared at each other.

Without a book, I walked from the ancient red brick library, which was filled with the pale sad light of early spring, and old men reading their newspapers, and the smell of paste and paper and decay.

In a few hours she will walk down the scooped out steps, her heels a busy clicking, buttoning her dark blue coat with the lynx collar that is good for two more winters. She will sniff a little,

wriggling up her nose. Her coat flares shorter in the back, buttoned tight over her stomach.

One bent arm will hold a book, and from the other dangles a large black purse. At the corner she will stop, looking at the sky. No, it won't rain, and the bus is crowded. Might as well walk. She moves her lower lip as she thinks.

She lives in a three room apartment with her sister Helen, who is younger and thinner and less reliable. Has to be looked after. She herself is not absent-minded. I may not be brilliant, she tells people, but I can certainly remember things.

She is panting slightly when she reaches the top of the stairs. They have a back apartment, to get the morning sun in winter and the afternoon shade in summer. For twenty years she has put a check in the letter slot of the manager at nine o'clock in the morning on the first of every month.

"Hello, Effie," says her sister, "I'm cooking cauliflower."

"So I noticed. Were there any aphids?"

"I don't think so." There is the sound of a lid being lifted. "No."

Effie hangs up her coat, rubbing smooth the defunct lynx head. She puts her hat on the upper shelf, and bends, her knees pointing outward, to reach her slippers. "Mmmn," she moans, and paddles to the bathroom to wash her hands.

When she comes out Helen is frying two mutton chops. "I made some chocolate pudding. Thought you'd like it."

"That's nice," says Effie, squeezing into the bench by the dinette table. "I didn't have much lunch. I had to go over some filing cards. Those college girls"—she jabs the butter—"have no sense at all. They can't do the simplest little thing. You have to watch them every minute."

"Did you have a hard day?" asks Helen.

"Just the usual. Anything happen to you?"

"We had a lot of business. Everybody is in a rush to buy a hat for Easter. And—oh yes!" She put down her knife and fork. "I found it, Effie. It's perfect for you." She tucks in her chin, and lifts her eyebrows.

"Found what?" The eye over the bulging cheek droops in a frown.

"A hat for you, silly. This is the spring you're due to have one. When I unpacked it I just had to look at it, as if I'd seen it before maybe one of the old ones mixed in by mistake. And then

it came to me. Why, this is Effie's hat! So I put it under the counter, with my name in so it won't be sold. Can you come in tomorrow to try it on?"

"What's it like?"

"It's green, that new shade, lime they call it. But it isn't loud! And it will go with anything. It has a nice brown bow on the side, and a strap in back to hold it on. It sits down on your forehead, very modish!" She turns her chin toward one uplifted shoulder.

"It doesn't sound very practical. It'll probably make me look crazy."

"Now it won't at all. Green is a good color for all summer, and the brown ribbon will go with your new shoes. You'll see. I know you'll love it."

"Well, I'll look. I guess I do need a new hat."

"I should say you do. You have a position to maintain, there at the library. People know who you are. You can't go around wearing any old thing."

"Well, maybe you're right." Delicately she picks up the chop bone, lifting her upper lip away from the grease. For minutes there is only the labial slap of eating.

Then Helen clears away the plates and returns to the table with two brown puddles of pudding, and top milk in a yellow pitcher shaped like a duck. "Look what I found," she says. "Quack-Quack! He was up on the top shelf, just covered with dirt. I gave him a good scrubbing. Cream, Effie?"

Effie pours a cloudburst of cream on her puddle from the duck's spread bill.

"Remember the day we got him?" asks Helen.

"Of course. Why shouldn't I?"

"Well don't be cross." Helen licks her pudding spoon.

"I wonder what ever happened to him."

"Who?"

"You know who! Effie, you can be the most provoking! The man who gave Quack-Quack to us of course. Mr. Simpson."

"He's probably dead by this time."

"Oh he couldn't be. He wasn't very old."

"Has it been that long?"

"It was in the summer of twenty-four."

"Goodness, really? You had one of those big horsehair hats. It was the first time I'd been to the fair. Remember how hot it

was? Phew! We sat in the pavilion to have a cherry phosphate. And we didn't know if we should let him sit down with us, but he seemed so *nice*—and he *was* nice, wasn't he?"

"He was all right."

"We never did find out if he was married."

"What difference does it make, for heavens sake?"

"Oh, not any I guess." Helen scrapes the bottom of her dish. "Effie?"

"Humn?"

"Which one of us did he give the duck to?"

"Why I don't know. To both of us I guess"

They sit looking at the duck, yellow and round with empty painted eyes.

"Want some more pudding, Effie? I made two extras for tomorrow, but we could eat it up tonight."

"Oh—I guess not. Unless you want more."

"No, I don't think so."

At the sink they do the dishes, Effie drying. The one who does the cooking always washes.

"Oh, Hilda called about the movie. Do you want to go?" Helen is rinsing out the dishrag.

"What's playing?"

"I don't know the name, but it's Gary Cooper."

"Mmn, I don't exactly feel like a movie tonight. You go ahead. I've got a book to read."

"You and your book! I always tell people you'd rather read than eat."

"I have to keep up with things to know what people ask for."

"Like me reading *Harper's Bazaar* and *Mademoiselle!*"

When Helen leaves, Effie stands in the empty living room. The hotair register blows the curtains slightly, a nervous ripple in the quiet. She straightens the pillows on the taupe divan, and lifts the lid of the Chinese candy dish. Inside are some salted peanuts and half a dozen peppermints. She picks up a mint and puts it back.

Wriggling her stomach she runs a thumb inside the top of her corset, pulls it down over the hips, and sits in the chair that matches the divan. The lamp throws a spotlight on her book. What is it? Travel? O. Henry? A whodunit? Whatever it is, she is not possessed. She crosses her small feet this way, then that, in the fur rimmed slippers. She scratches the short hair on the back

of her neck. She frowns. She listens. It is raining. The drops strike like metal on the window pane, stop, and strike again. Then they settle to a steady thrumming. Effie shivers and gets up. She puts her book down on the walnut veneer end table with the potted ivy and the unused ash tray.

I was too tired to go to the movie, she says to herself. Sometimes I think we go to too many movies. They're just stories.

She undresses and brushes her hair. She wets it in two dips over the temples and ties a brown net around her head. Then she looks in the bathroom mirror, holding in her hand two removable bridges. The day she wore the horsehair hat, the terribly hot day of the country fair, she had all her teeth. She still has most of them.

He didn't give the duck to Helen, she says. He gave it to me.

Sitting on the edge of her bed, she rubs her pink feet, grunting slightly as she lifts them to her lap. The marks of her service weight stockings are pressed into her insteps. Then she rolls into her twin bed, and her pillow is a soft and welcoming breast. Through the three inches of open window she can hear the rain. It comes faintly, softly, to her burrowed ears.

Those college girls must be made to learn their work, she thinks. Tomorrow I'll just crack down on them. Her legs ache a little as she stretches them.

She lies in bed, a quiet lump, and the rain falls steadily, as it fell in Chelsea and Bandol, and in Mentone.

REFLECTION AT DAYBREAK

BY FRANCIS C. GOLFFING

A mote's weight on a screw
Makes me stop or go, makes me stall or do;
    I continue to die and live.
Above the trees the gold is sensitive
    While I turn on my doubt,
Impelled by wheels within wheels and without,
    Ready for the faint trem-
or that will seize an oakleaf and my stem,
    For the sting of surprise
If I should pause or run counter-clockwise.

Dostoevsky And The Modern Temper

BY HARRY M. CAMPBELL

The first thing to be noticed in analyzing the structure of Dostoevsky's last three novels—*The Idiot, The Possessed,* and *The Brothers Karamazov*—is that the apparent awkwardness of the first person narrator is in reality a clever device to attain verisimilitude for the events of the stories. This rather chatty, very honest ordinary citizen, the narrator, asks us to forgive his lack of literary skill, and labors, sometimes almost too diligently, to get the facts of his narrative straight. In *The Possessed* he participates in the action of the story. In *The Idiot* and *The Brothers Karamazov* he observes part of the events and is careful to give reliable authority for his account of the rest. If he passes on to us certain rumors, he labels them as such, and if he has forgotten some details, he admits his uncertainty. For example, one of the most famous scenes in all Russian literature—the trial of Mitya—is suddenly interrupted by this comment: "But I see I can't go on like this, partly because some things I did not hear, others I did not notice, and others I have forgotten, but most of all because, as I have said before, I have literally no time or space to mention everything that was said and done." Such sentences never interfere with the swiftly moving and dramatic narrative but rather intensify it as it passes through the simple but very alert narrator's excited consciousness.

The drama is so intense even in the antecedent exposition that the narrator cannot waste time. He apologizes once for having to omit descriptions in his haste. Consider the opening chapter of *The Brothers Karamazov*. The gossipy but very careful account completes very dramatically and naturally in three and one-half pages what Balzac would have spread out over several chapters of laboriously straightforward exposition. Dostoevsky's narrator arouses interest in "one of the most senseless,

fantastic fellows in our whole district" by summarizing his whole career vividly in one sentance: "Fyodor Pavlovitch began with next to nothing; his estate was of the smallest; he ran to dine at other men's tables, and fastened on them as a toady, yet at his death it appeared that he had a hundred thousand roubles in hard cash." He then gives in two and one-half pages the whole tragedy of Fyodor's first marriage—to "the only woman who made no particular appeal to his senses." The unhappy wife at length eloped with a destitute divinity student, and Fyodor later heard of her death in Petersburg:

> She had died quite suddenly in a garret, according to one story, of typhus, or, as another version had it, of starvation. Fyodor Pavlovitch was drunk when he heard of his wife's death, and the story is that he ran out into the street and began shouting with joy, raising his hands to Heaven: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace," but others say he wept without restraint like a little child, so much so that people were sorry for him, in spite of the repulsion he inspired. It is quite possible that both versions were true, that he rejoiced at his release, and at the same time wept for her who released him. As a general rule, people, even the wicked, are much more naive and simple-hearted than we suppose. And we ourselves are, too.

These last sentences may seem somewhat like Thackeray's omniscient-author moralizing, but the technical purpose here is more complicated and quite different: the effort to distinguish between fact and rumor in both versions adds to the realistic tone of the story and at the same time probes deep into the complex personality of one of the main characters.

The Idiot opens with straight omniscient-author exposition but quickly changes into the dramatic conversation of Rogozhin, Prince Myshkin, and Lebedyev on the train going to Petersburg. Lebedyev, a petty government official, serves throughout the story as what Henry James would call a *ficelle,* an intermediary between the main characters, since he knows all the gossip about the upper classes. Rogozhin tells the story of his own unsuccessful pursuit of the beautiful and notorious Nastasya Filippovna to correct the misinterpretation of Lebedyev, who impudently mentions the affair after forcing his way into the conversation. This story reveals Rogozhin's impulsive, sensual nature perfectly and gives us a vivid glimpse into the emotionally complex char-

acter of Nastasya. The naked simplicity with which Rogozhin reveals his eventual degradation raises his story above the level of melodrama and brings to a close one of the most intense and most skillfully managed introductory chapters in all literature—after twelve short pages, mainly of conversation: "The old women began reading the Lives of the Saints over me," says Rogozhin, "and I sat there drunk. I spent my last farthing in the taverns and lay senseless all night in the street, and by morning I was delirious, and to make matters better the dogs gnawed me in the night. I had a narrow squeak."

The simple and very plausible narrator occasionally assumes omniscience when he is, as he says once in *The Possessed*, "writing with full knowledge, and describing things as they became known afterwards, and are clearly seen today." Not often, however, does he give the impression that he knows everything about his characters. He sometimes feels it necessary to argue with the reader in a hypothetical conversation about the interpretation of a character's motives. This method of dramatizing psychological analysis and avoiding the omniscient-author technique is even more effective in the conversations within the story during which one character reveals the motives of another or confesses his own. Sometimes the analysis becomes still more complicated when a very wise character, usually a priest, discovers that a confession made to him has motives deeper even than those revealed. Elder Zossima, in *The Brothers Karamozov*, sees clearly that Mme. Hohlakov's self-castigation comes from the desire to gain approval for her sincerity. Bishop Tihon, in *The Possessed*, probes beneath the confession of a far more complicated character, Stavrogin. Stavrogin intends to publish the confession of his corruption of the little girl Matryosha, but first seeks advice from the Bishop, who says:

> "Repentance can go no further than the admirable act, the self-chastisement which you have in mind, if only . . .
>
> " If only what?"
>
> "If only it is really repentance and really a Christian thought."
>
> "Quibbling," mumbled Stavrogin, pensively and absent-mindedly . . .
>
> "It is as though you purposely wished to represent yourself as a coarser man than your heart would desire . . ." Tihon was more and more outspoken . . . "Some of the passages in

> your account are couched in exaggerated language; it is as if you were admiring your own psychologizing, and you cling to each detail so as to amaze the reader by a calousness and shamelessness which isn't really in you. On the other hand, evil passions and the habit of idleness render you really callous and stupid."
>
> "Stupidity is no vice," Stavrogin smiled, beginning to blanch.
>
> "Sometimes it is," Tihon continued rigorously and passionately." Wounded unto death by the vision on the threshhold and tormented by it, you do not see, to judge by this document, what your chief crime is, and of what to be most ashamed before the people whose judgment you invoke: whether of the callousness of the act of violence that you committed, or of the cowardice you exhibited."

Such dramatic presentation of profound psychological analysis as this is a difficult technical feat very seldom accomplished successfully. Even a great artist like Henry James can give us only surface analyses in handling the dramatic present technique; in fact, his rigid adherence to this technique in his later novels was partly determined by his realizing that he was not very successful in probing deep into the human spirit. But Dostoevsky could achieve dramatic intensity at any depth.

There is always the danger, of course, that dramatic intensity will become melodrama, and many critics have found much of the melodramatic in Dostoevsky. Avrahm Yarmolinsky, to mention one, has called him a "Sophocles with the tricks of a Sue." But the clever phrase will not bear examination, because it is precisely the presence of the pervasive Sophoclean element that keeps the action from being "tricky." In Sue the action is given for the sake of sensation; but even in the most violent scenes of Dostoevsky we seldom fail to sense the underlying complicated purpose. The groundlings revel merely in the swiftly moving action. At the psychological level, Freudians discover, to their amazement, a very full and accurate pre-Freudian analysis of various neuroses and psychoses. But the Freudians no doubt find tendencies toward schizophrenia in Dostoevsky himself when he imposes a spiritual interpretation on this mental pathology. This spiritual interpretation constitutes the third level, to which, in Dostoesvsky's opinion, the other two are definitely subsidiary. Violent actions and psychological disturbances alike are for him illustra-

tions of chaos in the souls of his characters.

Dostoevsky has been able to avoid melodrama also because he is very skillful in using various forms of irony. The most obvious form is the ironic contrast obtained by his frequent juxtaposition of the chaotic and the normal. For example, the chaos in Mitya's mind when he seems to have lost Grushenka and to have murdered Grigory is distilled for the reader through the common-sense remarks of his friend Pyotr Ilyitch, who is both perplexed and disgusted.

The very simple language, too, is used in ironical contrast with the emotional intensity of many of the scenes. One of the best examples occurs during the very humiliating and apparently hopeless ordeal that Mitya undergoes when he is being tried for the murder of his father. After he falls asleep during part of the trial, the pathos of his tortured dream about the starving babes and women whom he is unable to help is suddenly relieved by his naive announcement to the lawyers as he awakes: "I've had a good dream, gentlemen."

Touches of humor are also used to relieve scenes which otherwise would become too emotionally oppressive. During Ivan's nightmare the strain of his conversation with the devil, in which Ivan's terrible struggle with his conscience is dramatically presented, is for the reader somewhat alleviated by the devil's wit. Dostoevsky's devil is quite as clever as the one in Shaw's *Man and Superman.* In fact, the tone of both is very similar: mock-gallant, sophisticated, wittily cynical. "I've caught you!" says Ivan to the devil.

> "That anecdote about the quadrillion years, I made up myself! I was seventeen then, I was at the high school . . . .I thought I'd forgotten it . . . but I've unconsciously recalled it —I recalled it myself—it was not you telling it! Thousands of things are unconsciously remembered like that even when people are being taken to execution . . . it's come back to me in a dream. You are that dream! You are a dream, not a living creature!"
>
> "From the vehemence with which you deny my existence," laughed the gentleman, "I am convinced that you believe in me.' . . . .
>
> "Not for one minute," cried Ivan furiously. "But I should like to believe in you," he added strangely.
>
> "Aha! There's an admission! But I am good-natured.

I'll come to your assistance again. Listen, it was I caught you, not you me. I told you your anecdote you'd forgotten, on purpose, so as to destroy your faith in me completely."

"You are lying. The object of your visit is to convince me of your existence!"

"Just so. But hesitation, suspense, conflict between belief and disbelief—is sometimes such torture to a conscientious man, such as you are, that it's better to hang oneself at once . . . . Are you asleep?"

"I might well be," Ivan groaned angrily. "All my stupid ideas—outgrown, thrashed out long ago, and flung aside like a dead carcass—you present to me as something new!"

"There's no pleasing you! And I thought I should fascinate you by my literary style. That hosannah in the skies really wasn't bad, was it? And then that ironical tone *a la* Heine, eh?"

Shaw never devised a cleverer combination of fantasy and realism than the scene from which this conversation is taken, but Dostoevsky's wit is far more complicated and more serious than that of Shaw. The humor here at first relieves and then accentuates the tragic irony of Ivan's savage struggle with his conscience when his fundamental atheistic credo is that all things are lawful. This second and deeper level of meaning prepares us for the ironical ending of the scene: after Ivan has at last decided to confess that he is the real murderer of his father because Smerdyakov was only his tool, his sacrifice is made useless by the sudden revelation that Smerdyakov has committed suicide. But, still more ironically, Ivan continues unshaken in his purpose, tells his story to the jury, and then succumbs to brain fever in the courtroom when the jury does not believe him.

Again, Dostoevsky uses irony very skillfully to avoid sentimentality. When, for example, Alyosha is moved to tears by Grushenka's gratitude and the pathos is beginning to sound like that of Dickens it is suddenly terminated by swift action: there is a noise in the passage and some one rushes in to announce that Grushenka's former lover has returned. Grushenka's hysterics at this announcement would also merit our impatience if the scene were not interrupted by the ironical commentator, Rakitin, who says: "Well, she has no thoughts for us now! Let's go, or we may hear that feminine shriek again. I am sick of all these tears and cries."

Another more basic irony in Dostoevsky's technique has to some critics seemed to indicate either confusion or irresponsible skepticism in his thinking. This is his tendency to have some of his most cherished ideas expressed by hypocritical or depraved characters, like Lebedyev in *The Idiot* or Stavrogin in *The Possessed.* The answer is, of course, that hypocrisy or depravity is never more realistically portrayed than when an evil character gives insecure expression to ideas which his creator holds sacred—for Dostoevsky such ideas as religious orthodoxy and a somewhat vague Slavophilism. With many of his characters, however, as with Dostoevsky himself in real life, the contrast between professed sentiments and actual deeds is not hypocrisy at all but the opposition, fundamental in his Christian philosophy, between the spirit and the flesh.

Another reason why Dostoevsky has often been erroneously considered either confused or lacking in conviction is that he never fails to look at a difficult problem from all angles. His course was dictated by the fact that he was both a great artist and an honest thinker. To allow the opposing side adequate expression is a means of attaining dramatic irony and at the same time avoiding shallow answers to complicated questions. *The Possessed* is in part no doubt an attack on the Nihilistic conspiracy against the *status quo* in nineteenth century Russia, and yet the champions of the established order are made to appear quite as ridiculous as the conspirators. The most eloquent attacks on socialism and Nihilism are made by Stepan, who is throughout the story, in the words of the narrator, a "phenomenally frivolous and unstable man." In *The Idiot* Prince Myshkin's eloquent eulogy of a holy, messianic Russia (one of Dostoevsk'ys most cherished ideas) is made to appear almost futile, since immediately after it Myshkin succumbs to a violent attack of epilepsy and since he naively believes that his snobbish and degenerate audience, a cross-section of the Russian aristocracy, will be the leaders in fulfilling Russia's great destiny. In spite of his political conservatism, Dostoevsky was, as an artist and a religious moralist, objective enough to see the weaknesses in men of all classes.

And, finally, Dostoevsky's objectivity is further illustrated by his recognition that there are grave dangers in too much reliance on the idea at the basis of all his art—psychological analysis. He satirizes very sharply the investigating lawyer who depended entirely on his psychological subtlety for an understanding of

Mitya's motives. Knowing himself as he did, Dostoevsky believed that the contradictory complexity of the human soul made it often inaccessible to the most careful psychological study. "To hell with all those who pry into the human heart," says the tormented Mitya in a mood which Dostoevsky sometimes experienced in his own unhappy life.

This problem of the complex human soul is closely related to the question of unity in Dostoevsky's novels. It is customary to say that he frequently digresses from his subject, at length and apparently at random. But what is this subject from which he is said to digress? Is it not precisely this complex and contradictory soul of his characters? Outward events were in a sense to Dostoevsky just as much symbols of the spirit as they were to Hawthorne, but he carefully avoided Hawthorne's specific symbolism and allegory. Dostoevsky chose, instead, to represent the spiritual condition of his characters by the structural arrangement of his material. A chaotic spiritual condition, then, demands a corresponding chaotic structure, and the apparent looseness or even incoherence in the narrative becomes an integral part of the subject, as in Eliot and Joyce. Indeed, literary expressionism and stream-of-consciousness appear quite modern in Mitya's dreams or his raving just before his pursuit of Grushenka, or in Myshkin's chaotic thoughts just before his epileptic convulsions. And Dostoevsky's impressionistic manner of shifting kaleidoscopically, before the resolution of one intense scene, into another equally dramatic also marks him as a forerunner of the modern school. There is one important difference, however, between him and some of his modern successors: the disintegration of his scenes and his language is never carried to the extent of obscuring communication.

The fundamental unity in Dostoevsky's novels, then, is that of the human personality—essentially one in spite of its spiritual dissociation and ambivalence. He is, it must be admitted, not so successful as Turgenev or Tolstoy in constructing the well-made novel, but he more than compensates by using with consummate skill almost all the technical variations usually said to have originated in the experiments of more recent novelists of the English-speaking world. In the new critical biography of Dostoevsky which ought to be written soon, his technical greatness and modernity should be stressed no less than his universally recognized spiritual insight.

L'ESPIRIT SERIEUX

FRANCIS C. GOLFFING

The "serious" man . . . agrees to the identification of himself with an arbitrary function which society has bestowed.

Identify me with my function, see
In me the headwaiter and nothing more.
My destiny is bounded by this floor.

My footfall echoing through the corridors
Gives me no guilty start; my fancy moves,
Domestic, in unalterable grooves.

My colleagues either relish the absurd
Or have their avocations, hunt and fish:
To be the headwaiter is all I wish.

When in my dreams I re-enact my life
Each act shows such propriety and sense
As though I'd never heard of *Existenz.*

Yet several colleagues on the upper floor
Hope to infect me with their *idees fixes;*
They say I'll learn — I'm only fifty-six;

They say instead of dreaming of the smooth
Parquet on which I like a dancer glide,
I'll dream of Kafka and of suicide,

Of tips I hoarded, of serviettes I soiled,
Of guests I snubbed, of girls I coveted
Pretending to lie primly on my bed,

Of gnawing *Sorge*, of the dizzy Naught,
Of a weird rival in seniority
Who snatching at my function will snatch me .

RETURN OF THE WAR PRISONERS

(As Seen Through the Window)

E. MICHAEL WILKINS

Here, where glass is pillared water running into hills,
Water slanted with gray perspectives roped to ships
Beyond below the stepback roofs thawed and telescoped)—
O prisoners home, we uncoil the scrolled carpet,
Offer gold-horned music to your tilted ship,
And alter the siren-wave from warning to bold welcome
While the mica hull-shadow rocks the water.
(But the other newspapered ships at the slantdocks funnelbare—
Do you hear indifference?)
Do not accuse us.
Far along the roads the clocked faces are banked,
The claque sound waved palm branches,
The straight eyes all one-colored homage
(*Your* eyes, in solitude, looking over each shoulder).
Do not accuse us.
We have floated the untainted banners—the holes were only for wind;
We have painted the harbor hills with words.
And the gargoyled night—shapes that paced from niches of mind
Walk now in feathersoled slippers
Toward the narrow ell-stair door.

JOURNEY SOUTH

BY HARRY SYLVESTER

The nun had not known the journey would be so dull. In the little convent school, all journeys had seemed exciting to her. Looking now at the plains, looking even at the mountains never out of sight in this country, she felt—there was no word for it—bored. The mood alone troubled her, quite apart from its cause. The habit of interior disciplines was so strong in her, that indulging in certain moods was not to be permitted, no matter how justifiably they might originate in circumstance. In the convent the ancient pattern of duty and prayer was arranged in such an endless concatination that boredom was truly rare. And since her duty of the moment caused and even included the boredom, the nun turned to her constant refuge, prayer, and picked up the breviary that had lain near her under a missal on the pullman seat. A ribbon marked the day hours, and by turning a page or two the book was ready at Terce for Friday.

Before beginning to read, she glanced upward at the girls in her care. The two Americans sat on opposite seats across the aisle, carefully dressed and not less bored than herself. They had stopped talking for what seemed to the nun the first time since the train had left Los Angeles. The shiney-papered magazines with their covers of bright-mouthed women lay on the seats near them as the missal and breviary had lain near the nun; one of the girls was "doing" her nails, the other looking backward at the retreating plain. One would think, the nun told herself, that Carol would know enough to wait for night and the seclusion of a berth.

The little Mexican girl on the seat opposite the nun was not pretty as were the two American, but she had aped them faithfully in the details of her lips, her nails and the powder too light for her skin. She seemed not bored but distracted, staring unseeingly

at the floor. She slumped badly, but the nun, embarrassed so near to strangers, could not correct Felice's posture now any more than Carol's lack of taste. She began to read. It was her habit when praying alone—perhaps a form of scruples, she thought—to linger over the psalms of the breviary and to wonder about their possible implications. There was not this chance when praying as a community with the other nuns. Today, her mind rested inexplicably on a few simple phrases. "For God loveth mercy and truth; the Lord bestoweth grace and glory," she read again; "to those who walk in innocence He refuseth not good things. . ."

It was one of those phenomena, she thought, that occurred often enough to impress the believer, but not often enough to convince the unbeliever. Too often she had seen what an almost miraculous shield innocence provided or claimed, but she knew for how long innocence and ignorance had been confused; as recently as ten years ago even in her own school. Yet if grace operated too fruitfully in one person, why not as well in another equally exposed to it? Carol and Anne, for example. It was not a thought that had ever given her much consolation.

She looked up. The whispering of the girls, or rather its tone, had disturbed her. All three of them were now across the aisle, Felice sitting with Carol, and with the curious mixture of the furtive and the intent which girls their age seemed able to manage, looking at something down the aisle. They were, with effort, smothering giggles. The third girl, Ann Beaufort, looked once briefly over her shoulder at the same thing. She was not giggling and seemed even a little pale. The nun, tall for a woman, had no difficulty in seeing what they were looking at, two men, one young, about twenty, the other in his fifties. The men were two sections away, near the centre of the car. Vaguely, the nun remembered that the wheels were supposed to shake that part of the car less than the sections over them. The word, sybarite, occurred to her for some reason, and with a slight effort she remembered that the men had gotten on that morning at Mazatlan.

The nun's first thought was to reprimand the girls in some quiet way; then she sensed more fully that their experience was something a good deal less healthy than the attraction of convent-school girls for boys at the end of the school year. She looked more closely at the strangers. Not used to judging men by their appearance—after all, she went weeks at a time without seeing any man except the priest celebrating early Mass—she was puzzled

at being almost immediately repelled by these two. Despite her calling, it could not be said that men made her uneasy. She beheld all men as through glass: to be seen, observed, even admired in a fashion, but not to be touched. Yet these two made her uneasy. She thought of them as smug; but she knew many people who were that. There was a soft, dissipated quality to these faces which she could not identify. Their luggage was very expensive and the wicker food-hamper now open between them revealed an elaborate set of eating and serving utensils. Her mind hung over something as though reluctant to acknowledge or perhaps merely to name it. Possibly charity stayed in the mind, possibly only the by now automatic rejection or ignoring of certain things. Then all devices failed the nun before the word, whispered, from across the aisle.

"—in Mexican?" Carol had said.

Felice giggled. "Feminada."

The nun felt herself flush. In the sudden coming of anger to herself, she could still wonder what the object and origin of anger were. Both seemed obscure. She made her voice quiet—her manner was always effortlessly so—and leaned slightly toward the girls. "I want all of you over here," she said.

Their faces—even Carol's, blank and surprised—told her that they knew she knew. Dutifully they rose, together as if in class or the refectory, and dutifully filed, as much as possible in the small space, over to her own section of the pullman. Carol rather ostentatiously sat next to her, the other on the seat opposite. Ann was definitely pale, the nun noticed. Felice, like herself, was still flushed under the dark skin, the too light powder. The effect, the nun considered, was almost ridiculous. Who was it, she wondered in annoyance, made them so sensitive about a dark skin? Even the ones coming up from their own country for the first time with virtually white powder on their faces?

She was evading an issue, she realized. Still dutiful, the girls were waiting, their hands folded. In another moment they might know she was at a loss as to what to say. She wondered how direct she ought to be: whether to merely indicate further her displeasure at their actions or to be more detailed? If so, what kind and how much detail? They knew so much more now. At their age, she herself had not known such a thing existed.

She said: "You young ladies seem to find your amusement in a rather unpleasant way." If they had been in any doubt as to

the extent of her knowledge, their silence now indicated that they no longer were. With the edge of one eye, the nun saw that Carol Murphy was brick-red. It made Carol look stupid; it even gave one an idea of what Carol might look like ten years from now. Felice had flushed anew. What surprised and even startled the nun were the tears that issued slowly from Ann's unblinking eyes and moved more swiftly down her face, falling and disappearing on the white, linen blouse.

Before this strange weeping the nun felt powerless. Perhaps seeing the exact futility in the nun's face, Ann tried to compose herself. Watching the effort, successful even as she watched, the nun forgot what she had been going to say. Perhaps it was rationalizing again, she thought, but she felt that she had said all it was necessary to say. Indeed, she had not desired for any of them as violent a reaction as she had already seperately produced in each.

She let her face change, become less stern. "Will we be to Guadalajara in time for lunch, Felice?"

"I don't think so, Sister. The trains are always late."

"Have you asked the conductor?"

"No, Sister."

"Why don't you."

"'All right, Sister."

"You may accompany Felice, Carol." the nun said.

The two girls left, unable to conceal their relief. For seventeen they were young in many ways, the nun thought, as Ann was old for eighteen. It was hardly a profound observation, the nun told herself, but it did make more strange the difference in the girls' reactions.

"Do you feel better, Ann?"

"Yes, Sister. I'm Sorry. . . ."

"Sorry for what?" The nun found her own attempt to smile rather pinched.

"I don't know." Trying herself to smile, the girl's face almost broke. She turned to look out the window.

"It isn't often that sin—something so unpleasant, anyway—is so apparent," the nun said. It was an awkward attempt at consolation, she knew.

The girl looked at her. "Do you—do you think the younger one is? I mean—unregenerately so. That is—" she swallowed and continued to look steadily at the nun.

The nun found that she herself had glanced forward in the

car, where the younger man sat facing them. She looked quickly back at Ann. "I don't know," she said. "I really don't know." He looked what the nun called sly. "I—I don't imagine it's a thing anyone but a physician could tell for sure." She hesitated again before saying: "Why do you ask?"

The girl's eyes filled again as she tried to look at the nun. Turning away she was trying also to shake her head, so that the whole motion was vague, yet seized or conveyed the mood of bewilderment and of grief.

But grief? the nun thought. And if so, for what? Ann didn't know the boy. And certainly few people any longer felt that emotional over sin, even sin as gross and sickening as this one might be to the young. Stopped at so many doorways, her mind entered finally the most obvious one. "Do you—I mean, you don't think you *like* that young man?"

The answer was quite prompt. "I—I couldn't very well—now."

Again halted, the nun sought the easy, the even sometimes holy refuge that the banal offered. "All right. Try not to think about it. You could pray for him. . . ."

The girl nodded, turned her head downward and sidewise in a gesture characteristic of her age, and touched the corner of one eye with a finger. "Excuse me, Sister," she said and left the nun.

The train climbed into mountains. From the mountains one could always see the plains in sunlight as from these always the mountains in shadow. It was a lovely country, the nun thought again, and for such strange violences to come continually from it. Half consciously she closed the breviary, Sext as yet unread, although it was past noon. Unease over the young was habitual with her by now: she had taught twenty years in convent schools. It was time the two girls were back. Looking up, she saw them coming along the aisle with the characteristic false hurry and fluster by which young girls tried to convince their superiors that they had not meant to be late.

They sat down on the seat across from her, their heads shaking in ridiculous unison almost before they began to speak. There was, the nun noticed, less assurance in the movements of the Mexican girl: they were again the pale aping of the American. "We won't be in for two hours," Carol said.

"No, Sister," Felice added.

In contrast to her own annoyance at having again to eat in

the diner, the nun saw their pleasure at the prospect. "How are the hotels in Guadalajara, Felice?" she said.

"Oh, very good ones, Sister."

And do they not serve dinner about the middle of the afternoon?"

"Yes, Sister. The big dinner then."

"Then I think it would be better to wait until we reach there. I should think you'd be tired of dining-car food by now."

"Yes, Sister," they replied, still dutiful.

The nun grew alarmed at how easily they, even herself, were disturbed by something outside the quite rigid pattern of the convent and the school. . . . She wondered if they saw as clearly as she now did, that she was disciplining them. Ann certainly would have seen. The nun found herself wishing the Mother Superior had not sent her along to accompany the girls on the journey. Usually girls of this age were permitted to make the trip home alone. It was, she saw clearly, a device of the Mother Superior's for insuring that she got a summer's study at the university in Mexico City. She wondered if it was necessary to mention any of what had happened today to the girls' parents. To Ann's parents—her father an official at the Embassy—perhaps. To Carol's, in the export business here, no. And what of Felice's? The nun found that she had not thought about the Mexican girl's parents. She wondered why she had not. Was it because she felt Felice was less important than the other two? Or because Latins and Mexicans seemed less stricken, less dismayed by the abnormal?

Ann returned, unmarked. Felice glanced at her curiously and with what amounted to respect. Carol looked at her resentfully. The two reactions startled the nun again. She wondered what Carol could possibly resent. Perhaps the superiority that sensitivity implied; perhaps the way her giggling had contrasted with Ann's emotion.

Slowly, almost unctuously, the two men ate an elaborate meal from their wicker hamper with its service of silver, its assortment of insulated jugs and bowls. The nun felt a faint, definite anger. She had been unable to refrain entirely from watching them. So strongly and for so long had she been convinced of the efficacy of mortification and penance, that she could not help but dislike the virtually feline way in which the two men enjoyed their food. Thank Heavens, she thought, we'll be rid of them in an hour.

Disturbed by many things—she realized that one of them was her own lack of charity—she opened the breviary again. But the psalms seemed dry, the prayers meaningless. She had a desire to be by herself. But there was no cell here. They had been unable to get a compartment and she hardly felt like sitting in the ladies lounge, even assuming that one might be alone there.

Sunlight moved on the thin, fine paper of the breviary: she was shocked to see that the edges had begun to color with age: and still she was only in her forties. She felt that she knew very little, had not achieved a commensurate sanctity for all that time in a place as holy as—even here and now—she felt that convent to be. She found that she was staring at the book and had ceased reading an indefinite time ago. Closing the rich, unread pages she looked up. The girls were uneasily quiet. Carol and Felice slumped in their section across the aisle; Ann was staring as the nun knew she herself had been a moment ago.

"Ann," she said, but when the girl looked at her—as emerging from water or from sleep—the nun found she herself had nothing to say, that she had merely wanted the girl to stop staring.

"Yes, Sister?"

"We should be in soon, shouldn't we?"

"We're backing in now, Sister."

Turning to speak to the girls across the aisle, in a dismay she could not account for the nun saw the two men preparing also to leave the car. But then, she told herself, she should have remembered it was the end of the line.

The crush and hurry of the station surprised her, easily surprised as she was by certain things. Half-open to the air, the pillared building held a crowd of people. The noise, the bumping, the faint sour smell seemed almost ceremonious for some reason. The bare feet of the poorer people, the incredible persistence of the porters disturbed her. Slowly, she and the girls moved toward white sunlight. She was grateful that Felice's Spanish seemed to bring a little island of order around them. The hot light struck suddenly and like a blow through her black wimple. There were horse-cabs standing under palms, but the porters were putting their baggage into a taxi.

The hotel was on a narrow street and looked unimposing from the outside, but inside was rich with bright, cool tile. Up stone stairs, along glass-roofed corridors they moved, the American girls revived by the novelty of the sliding rooves, the masses of blue

and green tiles—every pillar, every huge flower-pot—and the Indian chambermaids drawing respectfully aside as the little group passed. Felice was cheerful and naive again; she would see her family today or this evening. And the nun felt much better herself with the girls this way.

The high-ceilinged rooms were painted a cool green. A doorway connected them and without having said anything about it, the nun found that Carol had put her bags in her own room and that Ann and Felice were in the other room. The nun found herself unexpectedly exhausted and had to lie down, but waited until the girls had gone to dinner.

It was very restful in the room. The half-light that penetrated the blinds took color from the walls, so that with the mild coolness of the place the nun found there an illusion of being underwater. She had expected to rest for about a quarter-hour, then join her charges in the dining-room. She had even told Felice what to order for her.

It was dark when the nun awoke. She sat upright in alarm, then saw a crack of light under the door to the next room. She lay down again, a totally surprising thing to her, long used to years of rising in darkness and fatigue. Someplace there was music playing. Cheap and tinny, it came to her intermittently as on a fitfully-blowing wind, so that it was softened and made mysterious. She lay there, unconsciously listening to it and consciously wondering why she had yielded so to weariness, and after all the years she had triumphed over it. Or perhaps it was not weariness from which she had sought refuge in sleep . . . . The thought disturbed her and she rose and lit a bed-side lamp. Going to rub cool water on her face, she heard the girls begin to turn and speak in the next room as her movements became apparent to them.

She had intended to be remote and perhaps even cool with them, as contrast to what she thought they might feel was her weakness in falling asleep and for so long. But the two seemed so glad and even relieved to see her that she found herself smiling. "I had no intention of sleeping," she said.

"I guess you must have needed it, all right, Sister, though," Carol said.

"Where's Felice?" the nun asked.

"Her folks came for her, Sister," Ann said.

"Heavens, why didn't one of you wake me?"

They had trouble answering her. "After all, what will her people think?" the nun added.

"Oh, they said they'd be back tomorrow," Carol said. They want us all to come out to their ranch tomorrow."

"But you should have awakened me," the nun said. Again they did not speak. "What time is it?" the nun asked. "Have you had supper yet?"

"No, Sister," Carol said. "We were waiting for you."

Ann had hardly spoken and the nun looked at her. The girl's eyes evaded her own, although the young face remained quiet, knowing and—incredibly—dedicated. But to what? the nun wondered, and as much to conceal her bewilderment as for any other reason, turned and led them out and toward the dining-room.

There she found or guessed the reason for the girls unease or evasiveness. In the half-filled dining-room, the two men from the train were finishing their meal: they nodded with faint, wintery smiles to the girls, who acknowledeged recognition more by their increased unease and awkward turning away than they could have by more conventional gestures.

The nun was now bewildered; so much so that it almost hid her alarm from herself. But she knew alarm was there and wondered why. "Have you, have you met those gentlemen?" she said.

"Yes," Ann said; her voice was flat.

"You see, Sister," Carol said, "one of them, the older one, knows someone in Felice's family. Something about silver mines near here."

"And you met them this afternoon, then?" the nun asked.

"Yes, Sister. At dinner." Ann said.

The nun felt relieved for some reason and looked at the menu. It was in English and Spanish. She was very hungry. There was filet mignon and she wanted it very much but remembered it was Friday. The girls told her that was what they wanted. "But it's Friday." she said. "I'm surprised."

"You don't have to abstain down here," Carol said. "Some kind of dispensation."

"The old Spanish dispensation for driving the Moors out of Spain," the nun said drily. "You girls would think of that." She was about to order some eggs—there was no fish—when she wondered if she might be acting scrupulous; if she might not indeed be setting an example of scrupulosity and thereby, if mildly, giving

scandal.

She ordered three filets by pointing to the menu. They came promptly and she ate her's, rather distracted, and wondering if her enjoyment were not partly due to it being Friday. A bar with a marimba playing in it opened off the dining-room, a rather elegant bar with ladies dressed in evening gowns passing escorted, in and out of it. The nun saw the two girls watch the men go into the bar.

Back in their rooms she suggested that the girls retire early since they were going to the ranch tomorrow. "Yes Sister," Carol said. Ann's lips moved but she did not seem to say anything. She was still pale and distracted. The door to their room closed behind them, and the nun unexpectedly yawned. She was tired again: it was as though giving in to weariness after the years of overcoming it, she had released it like a flood: it was in her and around her as though she had already been drowned in it. She even decided to skip saying Vespers. . . so that clad in her cotton night-gown and a rough, white chenile bathrobe, she began Compline kneeling by the bedside. There was a passage in Compline for Sunday that she always said when alone, no matter what day of the week it was. It heartened her a good deal: "A thousand shall fall at thy side and ten thousand at thy right hand, yet no evil shall come nigh thee."

There was a soft, tentative knocking on the door to the girl's room. The nun stood up. "Come in," she said.

The door opened and Carol stood awkwardly on the threshold in a robe, high-necked night-gown and slippers. Her mouth was pulled down ridiculously in the broad face and the whole face seemed ready to break into weeping; rather dry weeping.

"What is it, Carol." The nun didn't move toward the girl.

"Ann—she got all dressed and went downstairs again." The face broke gradually with each succeeding word.

"But why?" Carol's arms moved stiffly and rather helplessly, and the nun said, "Sit down, Carol, and pull yourself together. Ann can take care of herself."

When the girl, slightly stooped as in a kind of half-deliberate stumble, had lurched to a chair, the nun sat on the only other chair in the room and said, more calmly than she felt: "Now tell me what happened."

Carol swallowed heavily. "That boy," she said. "Ann thinks

she can make him leave that man."

The nun recognized that her sense of shock was almost conventional, a kind of afterthought. She had known. The shock, rather mild, was succeeded by an almost completely unreasonable sense of being heartened. She remembered her best-liked phrase from the ordinary of the Mass: *sursum corda.* But since this latter feeling was completely illogical, she said: "Why did Ann do this?" knowing well why the girl had. "I mean, does Ann think she likes this boy?"

"No." Carol had stopped her dry sobbing and was close to being sullen, apparently because the effect of her revelation on the nun had been less electric than she thought it might be.

The nun saw clearly that her most immediate problem was to avoid giving scandal to Carol. "After all," the nun said, "who or what does Ann think she is? I mean, I'm afraid she's making herself rather ridiculous."

"Yes Sister," Carol's face and tone had cleared as if by magic.

Having restored Carol so quickly to normal the nun felt that she could now dismiss the girl without any great fear of her taking scandal. Although the Carols took to scandal rather easily, she reminded herself. "Now, if you'll go back to bed," the nun said quietly, "I'll tend to Ann."

"Yes, Sister. You wouldn't want me to go down with you?"

"I don't think that will be necessary. Ann may return a good deal more quickly than we think. You go to bed and I'll dress and go down after her."

The girl turned and went into her own room without speaking, closing the door behind her. The nun, her weariness gone, continued to sit for a while. She found that her most immediate problem still was to avoid giving scandal to Carol. Carol would return to the school next year: a consideration quite apart from jeopardizing Carol's immortal soul. The nun stood up and dressed, making rather more noise than was necessary. Leaving the room she closed noisily the door opening on the corridor.

Now that she was dressed and in the corridor, the nun found that she still did not know what to do. The hotel was built about a series of three or four patios or courtyards. They extended upward, roofless, to the night and through the second and third floors. A wall railing of tile guarded each of these openings. Alone in the dimness lit only by stars and an occasional night-light at the corners of the corridors, the nun hesitated, one hand on the

cool tile of the walling. There was a strong sense of being in a cloister again; not necessarily her own but one larger and more mediaeval. Only the music coming through the patio opening did not foster the illusion: it was the music of the marimbas in the cafe.

She knew that she should go down and bring Ann back from the cafe. Yet it seemed to the nun that perhaps more harm might be done by doing this than by not doing it. She might, for one thing, bring discredit not upon herself but the habit she wore. And with Ann in so strange a state of mind, it could certainly do the girl no good to be led, even figuratively, by the ear from a place of music, light and people. And so far as any harm coming to the girl, the nun simply could not see how it might.

Yet so fixed was the pattern of duty, the habit of convention, that her strongest inclination was to go immediately and directly to Ann. While she hesitated, feeling closer to panic than she liked, the nun heard footsteps on the wide, stone stairs hidden from her along the dimness of the corridor. The stairs, she remembered, came up through that first patio, in which was what would be called the lobby in an American hotel. Cages of birds hung in its space and two or three banana trees grew in great, stone pots. She saw it quite vividly in memory for some reason.

The panic left when she heard the steps. They were light, slow and irregular, the walking of a single person. The nun felt that it would not do for her to be seen here at this hour; not by anyone. Withdrawing into the shadow of an archway, she waited. The steps, those of a woman, approached her, and in the dim light the nun saw Ann slowly walking.

She could see the girl quite clearly: the simple evening gown of dark silk, the darkly-painted mouth, the hair gathered sharply back from the clear features. Greek, the nun thought, very Greek. And since she was not a sentimentalist, she frowned, wondering why she should think the word now. Any fool, seeing a young woman with her hair gathered up and back from her face, could think of the word Greek.

As she came near the tiled walling, the girl put her hand on it, as though for support or perhaps merely for guidance through the half-dark to which she was not yet accustomed. . . . The nun's eyes were accustomed to the half-dark. In it she could see that the girl wept, silently and the face not breaking. And that the steps were not so much those of a person groping through unaccustomed

light as of the young broken in pride. In pride and bright and good intent.

Slowly the girl, uncertain on her high heels, passed on toward her room. The nun heard a door open and close. She did not like that Ann should have to deal with Carol in a time such as this. Ann, she knew, had failed. As she had known Ann could not but fail. Yet in spite of her own forebearance as she had hesitated in the hall, the nun realized fully only now how young and kind, how good and honorable the girl's gesture had been. And after all, what had Ann expected to accomplish? And how? The nun could not answer these questions clearly. She was glad, though, that Ann had graduated and would not be back at the school next year when Carol retailed her version of what had happened. She wondered how she herself would fare in Carol's retelling. She found that she was amused at the Carols, something she never had been before. In a sudden influx of grace, she realized that this perhaps was the way the Carols learned wisdom, when they did learn it. She smiled in the darkness in a kind of joy she hardly recognized as such. Nor would she for a time move, for moving would dissolve this joy, this joy in which while she remained she could forget to weep.

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THE BOOK

By Ellis Foote

The book from which the observation came regarding cycloids' and schizoids' normal polarities was written by—what was the name? Some one of the good old gutteral language—well, he had the book in his hand—Mueller Freienfels. A book borrowed from the public library. He had read it with desultory interest, indeed, at times with sharp comprehension. He would have much liked to own it.

Schizoid—to be polarized between hypersensitivity and dullness. Necessary to alter the pleasure-pain concept for schizoids. Though the concept seemed to fit the cycloid, syntonic or normal people, it was not applicable to schizoids who were easier understood in terms of a plenum-vacuum principle. A plenum or vacuum of sensation, or even of meaning, principle. Much injustice was being done to schizoids, by themselves and by their cycloid brothers, trying to adjust a plenum-vacuum personality to the patterns of a pleasure-pain ethos or idea-enviroment.

Well, there were three possibilities: he could take the book back to the library, then go back at a later date and swipe it. He could tell the librarian he had lost the book and pay her for it. Or he could attempt to legitimately purchase a copy somewhere. He assumed it would be almost impossible to find. Still he distrusted his reasons for feeling that it would be necessary to steal the book, that his every-day financial obligations pre-empted the matter of buying an additional book that would be discarded as soon as read anyhow. Conversely, he wondered what library books were intended for—general misuse and neglect by a disinterested public or intense (?) use by some thieving poet. But the whole problem of whether to steal or not to steal the book seemed a little beside the point. He should be able to resolve conflict ethically and use-

fully by making the necessary effort to melt down the contents of the book in the regular periods of borrowing.

Plain to see, however, something ethical was lacking in his nature. Always secretly believing that he had a right to what he needed regardless of how it had to be obtained; that the world owed him what belonged to him by virtue of his interest in it. The world was on top of him instead of his being on top of the world—a neurotic point of view. But, cycloid or schizoid, what kind of a world was on top of him? Was he both schizoid and neurotic to escape the responsibility of being a more integrated fellow? He thought that the whole matter was extraordinarily involved in theory, though it might be easily straightened out in practice.

This business of *willing* to do something, provided the something was not contingent on too many factors over which the will had no control, was a healthful thing. There was hope in willing, and almost in willing alone. With much reading there was a sensation of being drowned; with learning, it was of no value until one had selected and willed to select what part of the learning was useable. All true wisdom was limited wisdom, was individualized wisdom—a personal selection. It needn't make one unhappy that there were more apples in the barrel than one could eat, more shoes on the shelf than would fit the foot.

Well, he had slipped a cog or two again. He was in one of his moments of vagueness. Then interest was gone. What, he asked himself, should he do about the book? That was a funny thing about this schizoid business. You could be both replete and empty at almost the same psychological moment. It all depended on the will, the instinctual motion, toward meaning, toward sensation even. You had it only if you willed it. Unless you willed there was no meaning. Beyond the principle of hypersensitivity and dullness, there was something semantic or not semantic involved in the schizoid nature, at least in *his* schizoid nature. Thereafter he would use the word, semantic, in his typology to classify those poor bastards who were not only neurotic but schizoid, not only schizoid but were ambivalent over meaning. Put it this way. What was there to schizoid to look forward to? To feel intensely about something. What was there for a schizoid-semantic to look forward to? To find meaning, which he would never find until he willed it.

The schizoid-semantic was an enviable person, after all. There were normal people, and they had their normality to keep

them warm. There were neurotic pople, and they carried enormous loads of their own building. Some, most of them in fact, messed up all their lives. Some were psychoanalyzed. Some stumbled of their own accord onto ways of greatness, of creation. Of neurotics, there were schizoid-neurotics who lived anywhere but in a house by the side of the road. They lived all their lives in a half death, and when the climatic, the physiological event occurred, they were little changed, they were ready, they were even in a way eager to be done with it. And there were neurotic-schizoid-semantics who were willed to find, even in the shade of death, a superior meaning, to become most alive in their inner if not their outer aspects.

Still and all, what was he going to do about the book? It was already several days overdue. It might be that if he kept it long enough the absence of a note from the library telling him to bring the book back would be evidence of their never having properly recorded its issuance, in which case he would just keep it.

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BOOKS

The Life of the Prophet

by Moyle Q. Rice

In April 1844, near the end of his brief, turbulent career, the Mormon prophet Joseph Smith hurled an inadvertent challenge to his future biographers: "You dont' know me. You never knew my heart. No man knows my history. I cannot tell it; I shall never undertake it. I don't blame anyone for not believing my history. If I had not experienced what I have, I could not believe it myself." During the century following Smith's violent death at the hands of an irate mob in an Illinois jail over sixty writers have attempted with attacks, clinical diagnoses, apologies, and exaltations to ravel his character.

For nine years, aided since 1945 by an Alfred A. Knopf fellowship in biography, Mrs. Brodie, 30-year-old native of Ogden, Utah, has done painstaking research in the endless circumstantial accounts, newspaper data, court records, personal testimony, and books dealing with Joseph Smith.* She has also investigated his own writings and the current literature of his day. As a result of her studies Mrs. Brodie has written what her publisher calls "a definitive biography that vividly illuminates many hitherto hidden passages in the life of the Mormon prophet." Actually, she reveals little that is unknown to the student of Mormon history. And vivid though they are, her accounts of the prophet's dreamy, shiftless youth, the founding of the church, the persecutions of the Mormons in Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois, the growth of polygamy, and the Nauvoo debacle, as well as her minutely documented evidence of Smith's financial and political chicanery—all have the familiar ring of an old song.

The strength and interest of Mrs. Brodie's eminently readable treatment lie not so much in the revelation of new or sensational detail as in her regard for the prophet as a subject worthy of an excellent piece of literaure. She instills a sense of discovery even in the reader familiar with the events and scenery. As an objective writer of chronical history she is only fair, and with a noticeably wavering point of view. Here is Joseph Smith, still an enigma, but neither distorted into a vicious imposter and designing conqueror of the world nor unconditionally eulogized as a modern savior and inspired prophet of God. The author sees him not as an abnormal phenomenon but as a remarkable man, a purely Yankee product, as much a normal outgrowth of his environment as was Jonathan Edwards before him. A prodigious and talented mythmaker born to a period of nonconformity and reaction against Calvinism, when religious liberty was spawning dissenting sects and prophets by the score, he created out of a myth a religious book that might be regarded as an early piece of frontier fiction. To satisfy his desire for personal power and his love for the theatrical he founded a church which reflects along with his writings much that is good and virile in American folklore. That this church has today over a million adherents is not due, Mrs. Brodie believes, to the fabulous book on which it was founded, but to the magnetic, persuasive prophet who wore the mantle of God-like authority and whose synthesis of the mystical and the worldly was the ideal formula to capitalize on the mellenial spirit of the time and the desire of the people for a satisfying religious code that could resolve the problems of this world and the hereafter with positive and convincing finality. Joseph Smith was the church.

Whether **No Man Knows My History** is to be construed as an attack on the Mormon Prophet or as an intensely interesting account of an almost legendary figure of the early nineteenth century American scene depends largely upon one's emotional attitude. Since the Mormon myth is built around superlatives, any literature dealing with it in the comparative degree or below is considered derogatory. Even Wallace Stegner's entertaining and seemingly innocuous **Mormon Country** is regarded as an anti-Mormon book because it is not entirely complimentary. Certainly Mrs. Brodie presents damaging evidence against many of the sacred canons and firm beliefs of the church. Smith's supposed vision of God is branded as a dream. She hardly admits the possibility of a divine origin for the **Book of Mormon,** presumably translated from mysterious "plates" which Smith dug from the

*No Man Knows My History, The Life of Joseph Smith by Fawn M. Brodie, New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1946. 475pp. $4.

Hill Cumorah near Palmyra, New York. The book itself she subjects to a merciless criticism as pretentious, dull literature, "a mutation in the evolution of American literature, a curious sport, at once sterile and potent." She likens it to the Koran and **Science and Health,** "all an obscure compound of folklore, moral platitude, mysticism, and millenialism." She gives excessive space to the not unheard of comparison between Mormon and Masonic rituals and to the ever-enticing subject of polygamy, on which almost nothing new remains to be said. And, she goes to unwarranted lengths to determine the number of Smith's wives, to disprove the favorite Mormon thesis that he was an ignorant and unlettered youth, and to illustrate his use of revelations as an expedient means of dealing with urgent problems, spiritual and mundane.

Almost all of the author's evidence is attractively presented and has the appearance of authenticity, and she has been careful to evaluate her sources. However, she has quoted heavily from admittedly anti-Mormon works, and particularly from those of three of the principal crusaders against Mormonism: John C. Bennet, Eber D. Howe, and John D. Lee. Also, many of her copious references to Joseph Smith's own **History of the Church** are used for deliberate ironic effects. In no sense, though, can Mrs. Brodie be called malicious, and her only flagrant abuse of source material is the selection of a statement by Brigham Young, which taken from its original context has a most unfortunate connotation. Much of the devastating commentary and embarrassing evidence seems carefully arranged to dull the praise which the author periodically lavishes on the prophet. Not only are many damning quotations placed for maximum rhetorical emphasis, but most of the chapters end with a ringing negation or on a heavy note of irony. These devices can be justified only as a means to dramatic composition.

As a prose stylist, Mrs. Brodie is excellent, and she has succeeded in giving the most coherent, unobscured picture of the early growth of the church that has been written. Not only is her narrative smooth and colorful, but her sense of form has resulted in an admirable blending of Mormon history with the full and intricate historical pattern of the time. Yet she has adroitly subordinated all events and personages to the character of Joseph Smith. One is left with the feeling that she has great admiration for him, not as an eloquent prophet of God or inspired mystic, but as a man who loved wealth and knowledge, who developed majesty and dignity under persecution, and above all, as one who could fire people with a sense of the richness of life.

WINTER LANDSCAPE

by Bernard Raymund

D. R. Savage is known to readers in America through his contributions to **Poetry, Partisan Review,** and other periodicals. Some of these poems are taken from an earlier volume. **The Autumn World.** Rigorously selected from the body of his work they form what is substantially a sequence of unsual power and profundity of insight. The key to his temperament is best given by

LANDSCAPE

There where the river shrank past shack and shelter
I dug the iron earth and planted iron
for mutilated trees to drip all winter
out of the itching of the dangerous sun.

I planted dragonteeth: and men of metal
armoured with anger climbed from the sullen ground
aching with pain to murder the maternal
and spill the running wax with which they groaned.

And where they paced the torn ramshackle circle
of grief and sin the crippled shells of pain
rose from the bed of sorrow with a manacle
of splintered bone to ring the bursting sun.

There where the gasdrums hoisted
through the city
I hacked a corpse of grass and fed with
death
the mouth of seaweed in a gastly pity,
and drove my martyred men again to
earth.

But though Mr. Savage in this volume (**A Time to Mourn** — Poems 1933-43. D. S. Savage Routledge 2/6) can discern no signs of a happier Spring he is not incapable of a certain wry humor as in

LIFE OF LORD TENNYSON

Lord Tennyson walked pensively from
the green plush sitting-room
To pat the head of the mastiff on the
lawn.
The pampas-grass grew round the Crys-
tal Palace
Whose splendour put the Palace of Art
to Scorn.

The grimy buffers of industry had
shunted his carriage
Down a dead siding where even the air
was dead.
He had taken a look out of the sooty
window:
"Trespassers will be prosecuted" the
notice read.

Lord Tennyson walked in the musty
book-walled library
And a statue of Wordworth looked
down on him from a shelf.
He raised his hands to his brow in mute
supplication,
But the statue said coldly, "Work it
out for yourself."

Lord Tennyson started out to write "In
Memoriam."
He got some pretty good phrases in it
too.
He presented it to the Queen in a gilt-
edged binding.
The Queen said, "Thank you, Tenny-
son. How do you do?"

He died. They entombed his remains
in Westminster Abbey.
Solemn black borders framed **The
Times** that day.
Mendelssohn was played on the draw-
ing-room piano
Beneath a picture of Landseer's "The
Stag at Bay."

Many more poems cry out to be quoted, his **October**, the theme of which is echoed in the three noble **Sonnets** with which he concludes his volume, his **Lines Composed on Looking Through a Volume of the British Poets, January, Separation, Winter Offering** and **Living.** But for its remarkable play of vowels and consonants it is best perhaps to select,

EARTH

Earth is the element of which we are
made,
Earth sodden and sagging, earth dogged
and dull,
Earth clodding on cart-wheels, earth
clogging on spade,
Earth dragging us down with its dread-
ful pull.

As cottages from quarries of neighbor-
ing stone
We are built in our bodies and mortared
with mud,
We are bolted with bones on a frame-
work of bone
And filled with a plaster of flesh and
blood.

This earth is the forehead and the fra-
gile hair,
The frangible fingers and the flattened
toes,
The whirl of the eye and whorl of the
ear,
The curl of the mouth and the quirk of
the nose.

And earth our master and our sometime
slave,
The measure of love and the meaning of
lust.
Is the womb of our birth and the wall of
our grave,
The dust of our self and the self of our
dust.

Earth is the substance in which we
inhere,
Earth hollow and hungry, earth fattened
and full,
Earth clotting the tongue and earth
caulking the ear,
Earth dragging us down with its dread-
ful pull.

This book is one that deserves many thoughtful readers in an America too prone to accept only the voluble as genius and to scorn the intelligible as inane.

THE MIDNIGHT CRY

by Dale L. Morgan

IN the spring of 1843, Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet, hearkened to the rising religious excitement attendant on the evangelism of William Miller and issued a public pronouncement against false prophets, altogether denying that the end of the world would come in 1843. An upstate Illinois editor, while entirely agreeing with Joseph's thesis, nevertheless found something amusing in these remarks. "Pot calling the kettle black, in every sense of the word," said he with satisfaction.

This unceremonious lumping together of two 19th century religious leaders served at least to point up interrelationships which are less obvious a hundred years after. Millerism and Mormonism were two of the more striking products of the American Pentecost, and though as religious movements and social forces they went their separate ways, the history of either sheds revealing light upon the other. The literature of Mormonism, for example, is enriched with many Millerite allusions—as when a disconsolate Saint concluded in 1844 that the Great Event which had been indicated by all the prophetic signs and portents was the tragic rejection by his generation of the Mormon prophet.

These prefatory remarks about Francis D. Nichols' **The Midnight Cry** (published at Takoma Park, Washington, D.C., by the Review and Herald Publishing Association) will serve to illustrate that more may be dug out of this account of Millerism and its times than the author consciously put into it. It is one of the useful by-products of any responsible contribution to history that it gives us new insights, sometimes unexpected and unforseen by the author, into the sources and the evolution of our culture.

Written evidently by a lay member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church possessed of scholarly inclinations and a temperate mind, **The Midnight Cry** is

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frankly subtitled "a defense of the character and conduct of William Miller and the Millerites, who mistakenly believed that the second coming of Christ would take place in the year 1844." Modestly Mr. Nichols doubts his ability to write a wholly impartial history of Millerism, and he decides, in any event, that such a work is not now called for. He writes professedly as an advocate concerned with correcting a mass of misrepresentation.

The need of a responsible work on Millerism has been apparent to anyone who has labored with American social history. Mr. Nichols' book leaves something to be desired because of its self-imposed limitations. It studies Millerism in somewhat of a vacuum—with due attention, to be sure, to contemporaneous life, but only as this is handled in an isolated chapter, "The Kind of World in Which Millerism Flourished." In due course someone will write a definitive account of Millerism, but in the meantime Mr. Nichols has hacked away a tremendous growth of misconception and misrepresentation; in the clearing he has made, it is possible to get an objective view of this fascinating episode in our history.

Born in Massachusetts in 1872 William Miller was a free-thinker in his youth who, after service in the war of 1812, was impelled to a study of the Bible and emerged from that study with a powerful conviction of its truth and its susceptibility to literal interpretation. Two years of constant study led him to the conclusion that the Scriptures must be interpreted to show that about 25 years from that time, i.e., about 1843, "all the affairs of our present state would be wound up." The conception was by no means original with him, since the expectation of the end had been constant in Christianity from the beginning, and the prophetic books of the Bible had preoccupied such minds as that of Sir Isaac Newton. But in his generation it fell to Miller to be the great evangel of Christ's coming, and after 1831 he preached his message with fire and force. He made a group of able converts, including the Boston minister, Joshua V. Himes, who has a small celebrity in Mormon history as the publisher of the first anti-Mormon imprint (Alexander Campbell's "Delusions," in 1832), and after 1840 the movement came into its own. Newspapers and periodicals publicized the cause, a series of great camp meetings were held throughout the East, some in the Great Tent which was a wonder of the age, and a rather amorphous church organization was instituted.

Originally Miller set the time of the advent of Christ as between March 21, 1843, and March 21, 1844, the Jewish prophetical year. This date having failed, a specific date was calculated, October 22, 1844. When Christ's coming still delayed, Miller and his followers could feel that their labors had not been unavailing, for "this preaching of an exact date when men must meet God, served the purpose of a test to discover those who really loved the Lord and His appearing. They reasoned that God overruled to make this disappointing experience serve a divine purpose." To the last, however, Miller believed there had been only some minor error in his elaborate chronology, and he died in December, 1849, still in the immediate expectaion of the literal coming of Christ. The Adventist churches which are his spiritual inheritors a century later are estimated to number something over a half-million members.

The Midnight Cry is a service to history precisely in the degree that it is a disservice to folklore. On Mr. Nichols' showing, one is disposed to lay tenderly away those cherished fancies that the Millerites were steaming fanatics, that they arrayed themselves in billowing ascension robes, climbed to house roofs and the tops of trees, and wildly threw away their property in anticipation of the day of the end, that the country's asylums filled to overflowing with those unhinged by the millennial excitement, and that converts were numbered in millions. He has dug patiently in newspaper files, manuscript collections, asylum records, and the general literature, and the resulting portrait of William Miller and his religious movement is both informed and urbane. Perhaps there is too much of sweet reasonableness in Millerism as reflected in this evaluation, for it may be taken for granted that strong convictions, strongly held will always be productive of certain emotional and intellectual excesses. But Mr. Nichols has taken his stand fairly on the record; the burden of proof has been shifted to such purveyors of hearsay and rumor as Clara Sears, with her **Days of Delusion,** and a more recent writer in the American Mercury, both of whom Mr. Nichols disposes of rather efficiently.

More reflectively, **The Midnight Cry** is an interesting demonstration of the tendency ideas have to set up institutions in their image. As with Mormonism, the social sustenance of Millerism was the prevalence among the people of an extremely literal view of the Bible. Both these religions were if not theological at

any rate institutional innovations filling a need for the social expression of literal Biblical ideas. The systems of ideas and the institutions embodying and evangelizing them impacted in turn upon American society, and it is instructive to observe the attitudes which crystallized in reaction. It is clear from any study of this kind that whether from inertias or resistances, society feels a need to eccentrize innovations and innovators, to burlesque and caricature them, to incarcerate them securely in a folklore. Thus Mr. Nichols' book is a well-constructed telescope having two utilities. One may use it to bring into clear view the small detail of Millerism, by no means least interesting among the developments in American religious history. Or one may reverse it for an equally instructive view of the large detail of American society and social behavior.

GERMAN LITERATURE

by M. L. Nielsen

COMPETENT and thoroughgoing studies of Modern German Literature written in English have never been plentiful. The last attempt at an exhaustive survey to be made before the war was Jethro Bithell's **Modern German Literature,** which appeared in England in 1839. Though comprehensive, it was written with considerable bias and was, at least in parts, more an encyclopedia of names, titles, and dates than a serious critical study.

The recent book by Victor Lange **(Modern German Literature,** Cornell University Press, 1945) is not of the type to make up for this lack. It is an essay purposely employing broad strokes and generalizations and attempting to give in little space an over-all picture of recent German literary movements.

The relatively brief space devoted to a subject so extensive and complicated leads inevitably to some oversimplification, and the reader who is familiar with the details of the recent history of German literature is apt to find the work disappointing in spots. A case in point is the curt dismissal given to the expressionistic drama.

But within these limitations Mr. Lange has done a thoroughly competent job, and the reader who is less familiar with the details of the subject will find it an informative and even stimulating study. Of particular interest to many will be the author's chapter on **The Threatened Heritage,** which has something to say about the literature of the Nazi years in Germany. Mr. Lange has had the courage to say something which sooner or later had to be recognized; namely, that not all the sincere and conscientious writing in the German language during the period from 1933 to 1945 came from the exiled writers. Though it may be too soon fully to estimate the effect of the Nazi decade upon German literature, future historians of the subject are apt to discover, as Mr. Lange claims, "that no small number of distinguished writers have continued, with or without the expressed approval of the authorities and in spite of the rigors of the time, to pursue their literary work. Strong intellectual currents, coming to life . . . long before the cataclysmic crisis of the thirties, have carried these men across the period of perilous suspense."

FREUDIAN INFLUENCE

by Ray B. West, Jr.

IF it might be said that any work which undertakes a study of literary influence is upon dangerous ground, then we must grant the initial difficulty and perhaps the weakness of Frederick Hoffman's study of Frudianism and literature.

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(Freudianism and the Literary Mind, Louisiana State University, 1945.) In the first place, while it can be said in general that an author like Thomas Mann has been influenced by Freudian ideas, it is an altogether different matter to put one's finger upon the specific ideas which have influenced him, to trace the metamorphosis of those ideas in the artist's mind, and to detect them in the finished literary product. In the second place, the term "Freudianism" as it is used today embraces so much that is not-Freudian, so much that is more Jungian or Adlerian or just pure psychiatric quackery, particularly as it is applied by literary artists, pretenders, or by Hollywood directors, that the forest may be said virtually to obscure the view of the trees, and a great deal of clearing-away is necessary before one can gain a clear perspective.

It is probably in this second respect that Mr. Hoffman's volume is most valuable. While he devotes considerable space to a discussion of the problem of influence, the reader does not succeed, eventually, in feeling much more certain at the end than at the beginning about how much Freud has influenced twentieth century authors, not even such writers as Joyce, Kafka, Lawrence, Mann, Sherwood Anderson, or Waldo Frank, to whom the author assigns separate sections of the book. On the other hand, Mr. Hoffman does succeed in conveying considerable information concerning problems of which professional psychologists are amazingly wary; that is, the relationship of psychology, particularly psychoanalyis upon literary creation. Not that Mr. Hoffman, himself, takes a particular position, but one feels that he is attempting an honest evaluation of the position taken by the professional psychologist and that he is not misled by the optimistic predictions of either Sigmund Freud or Thomas Mann, both of whom, he says, may have been indulging in "wishful thinking." He presents two alternatives, finally: either the hopefuls will be proved right and Thomas Mann may become the "intellectual hero of the century" or the literary world will turn to "the bitter resignation of Kafka and the ironic position of Kierkegaard."

If a choice were necessary and if this book were not a kind of combination between research scholarship and literary criticism, one feels that Mr. Hoffman would be leagued against the irrationalists, in and out of the psychonalytic movement, and with the rationalists, though not taking so extreme a position as, say, Mr. Yvor Winters, for he ends his book with the statement that, "It is all a matter of the basic dignity of man, and that dignity must of necessity be tested by the bitter and all too uncertain struggle against his wish for irresponsibility."

COMMENT, (Continued)

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* * *

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